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361 Heart Butte, in the southern tip of the reservation is
366 another center of full-blood population. An elementary school,
368 Catholic church, combination post office and store, a community hall and scattered houses form the community center for the three to four hundred people living in this part of the reservation. The people go either to Browning, thirty-six miles north, or to Conrad or Valier, off the reservation to the east, for business and shopping requirements.

Little Badger, south of Browning, is another small center of perhaps forty persons, largely full-bloods, who live around an elementary school and community hall.

The old Cut Bank Indian Boarding School, on Cut Bank Creek seven miles north of Browning, is now a dormitory for boys and girls of elementary school age. These children are taken by bus to the public schools in Browning.

The Tribe

642 The Tribe is both a political entity with legislative, judicial
473 and executive powers, and a business corporation. The Corporate Charter of the Blackfeet Tribe establishes the Tribe's sphere of authority over the handling of funds and the use of tribal assets for the benefit of its members. All tribal members are shareholders in the corporation
[643] and have a vote in its affairs. The thirteen members of the Tribal Council direct both the political and business affairs of the Tribe and the Corporation.[46]

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[46] U.S., Office of Indian Affairs, Corporate Charter of the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Montana (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936).

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641 non-members in the awarding of grazing or farming leases of trust land,
[427] and tribal members of one-fourth or more degree Indian are given a
[464] preference credit in applications for employment by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These are a few of the privileges that go with tribal member-
[473] ship. As members of the corporation, the people also share in the
[434] earnings of the corporation. Periodically the council votes a per capita payment as a distribution of tribal income in excess of that required for the operational expenses.

657 Such privileges are offset by some liabilities--particularly
425 for those men who feel competent to handle their own affairs. Trust lands must be leased through the Agency land office and all use, leasing, procurement of fee patent titles, and sale of land come under government supervision. Tribally held trust lands are covered by the same regulations.

428 The allotment acts provide that the inheritance laws of the
423 state shall govern the distribution of allotted lands upon the death of
[671] an allottee. The laws of Montana recognize disposal of property by will, and the Federal government recognizes the transfer of trust title, in whole or in part, by will. In the absence of a will, state laws define the succession and the shares of an estate each heir shall receive. The result of fifty years or more of practice has been an increased fragmentation of original allotments to the point where an allotment may have as many as fifty owners, or have been portioned out
[427] into a series of plots too small to serve economic ends. The Agency is charged with the duty of keeping records of such changes in ownership, and with leasing such lands for the benefit of the owners. A lease

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and to adopt a constitution, and those who organized were given broad powers of self-government.[136] Organized tribes were also empowered to incorporate and manage tribal properties and income. Actions of both the political and business organizations were subject to approval and review by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In addition, the traditional cultures were given recognition for the first time. A circular sent to all Agencies in 1934 illustrates the sharp reversal from previous communications about Indian cultural practices:

> No interference with Indian religious life or expression will hereafter be tolerated . . . . And it is desirable that Indians be bilingual . . . . The Indian arts are to be prized, nourished, and honored.[137]

The Indians were to have a choice as to course of their development.

The Period of Self-Government, 1935-1960

The Blackfeet Constitution and the Blackfeet Corporate Charter were accepted and approved in 1935. The population continued to grow: the report for 1935 lists the membership of the Blackfeet Tribe as 3,962 of which 561 were living outside the reservation jurisdiction.[138] The economy improved slowly after the bad years of the early thirties. The stockmen, in particular, were aided by a provision for a repayment cattle pool authorized in 1934.[139] A man could build a herd by borrowing cattle from the pool and repay in kind from the increase.

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[136] Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, op. cit., 1941, p. 419.

[137] Ibid., 1934, p. 90. [138] Ibid., 1935, p. 163.

[139] See Ibid., 1937, pp. 212-213 for repayment in kind program, and Ibid., 1944, p. 241 for a review of the program.